

**To:** R7 Senior Staff[R7\_Senior\_Staff@epa.gov]  
**From:** Bryan, David  
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**Subject:** RE: MO Coalition for the Environment - Update on Meeting Held This Morning - West Lake Landfill

## Expert: Underground Fire In Bridgeton Creates 'Dirty Bomb' Potential

**Brett Blume**

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<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/03/15/expert-underground-fire-in-bridgeton-creates-dirty-bomb-potential/>

**ST. LOUIS COUNTY, Mo. (KMOX)** – Those concerned about an underground fire burning in north St. Louis County are ramping up the rhetoric in their attempt to warn the public.

Peter Anderson, executive director of the Center for a Competitive Waste Industry, raised the specter of radiation leaks and possibly even an explosion if a fire burning beneath the Bridgeton Sanitary landfill eventually makes contact with radioactive waste buried at the nearby West Lake Landfill.

“If you have the combination of that fast-moving fire and you have methane explosions...there is supposedly jet fuel there...you can have the conditions for a dirty bomb,” Anderson told a roomful of concerned residents and community leaders during a meeting in Bridgeton Friday morning.

Another expert, Dr. Bob Criss with the Stable Isotope Laboratory at Washington University, said one of the biggest problems is the lack of any solid knowledge about exactly what is buried in those landfills.

“Neither the nature of the radioactive wastes, nor relevant levels of background radiation, have been adequately characterized,” Criss said.

He repeatedly took Republic Services, the parent company of Bridgeton Landfill LLC, to task for their handling of the entire matter.

“Few things are as absurd as dumping almost 9,000 tons of waste containing radionuclides into an unlined landfill in a floodplain, all in a major metropolitan area,” Criss maintained.

The phrase “dirty bomb” definitely reverberated with most of those in attendance, with some questioning whether dropping that highly charged term in an open forum amounted to fear

mongering.

That sentiment was echoed by Tim Trost, area president for Republic Services, who issued a statement following the meeting. In it he said those trying to link the odor and the decomposing material at the Bridgeton Landfill with the “low-level” radioactive material at West Lake Landfill are misleading the general public.

“They are purposely and irresponsibly scaring residents with their speculation,” Trost concluded. “The EPA now needs to release its information and end this speculation once and for all.”